



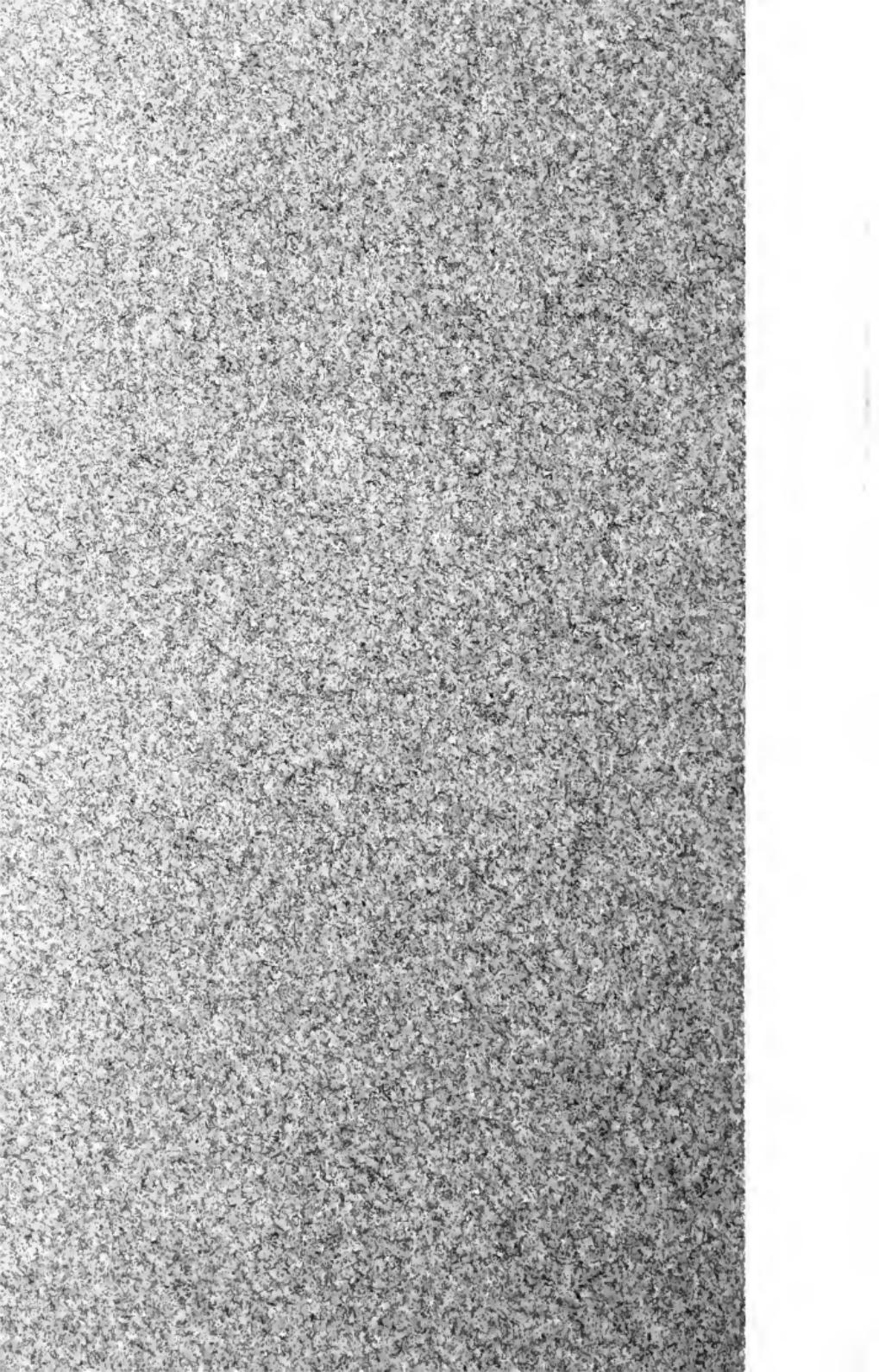
Class PS 662
Book 7904

Author _____

Title _____

Imprint _____

10-27179-3 360



The Indian Corn

By Ex-Gov. Richard J. Oglesby

The Indian Corn

Presented to

Sister Melode Engst





RICHARD J. OGRESSA

1883

RICHARD J. OGLESBY

1893

The Indian Corn

Impromptu Speech
of
Ex-Gov. Richard J. Oglesby

Made at the
Fellowship Club at Chicago,
September 9th, 1894, on
the occasion of the
Harvest Home
Festival



*Written from memory, by Volney
W. Foster, a member of the Club*

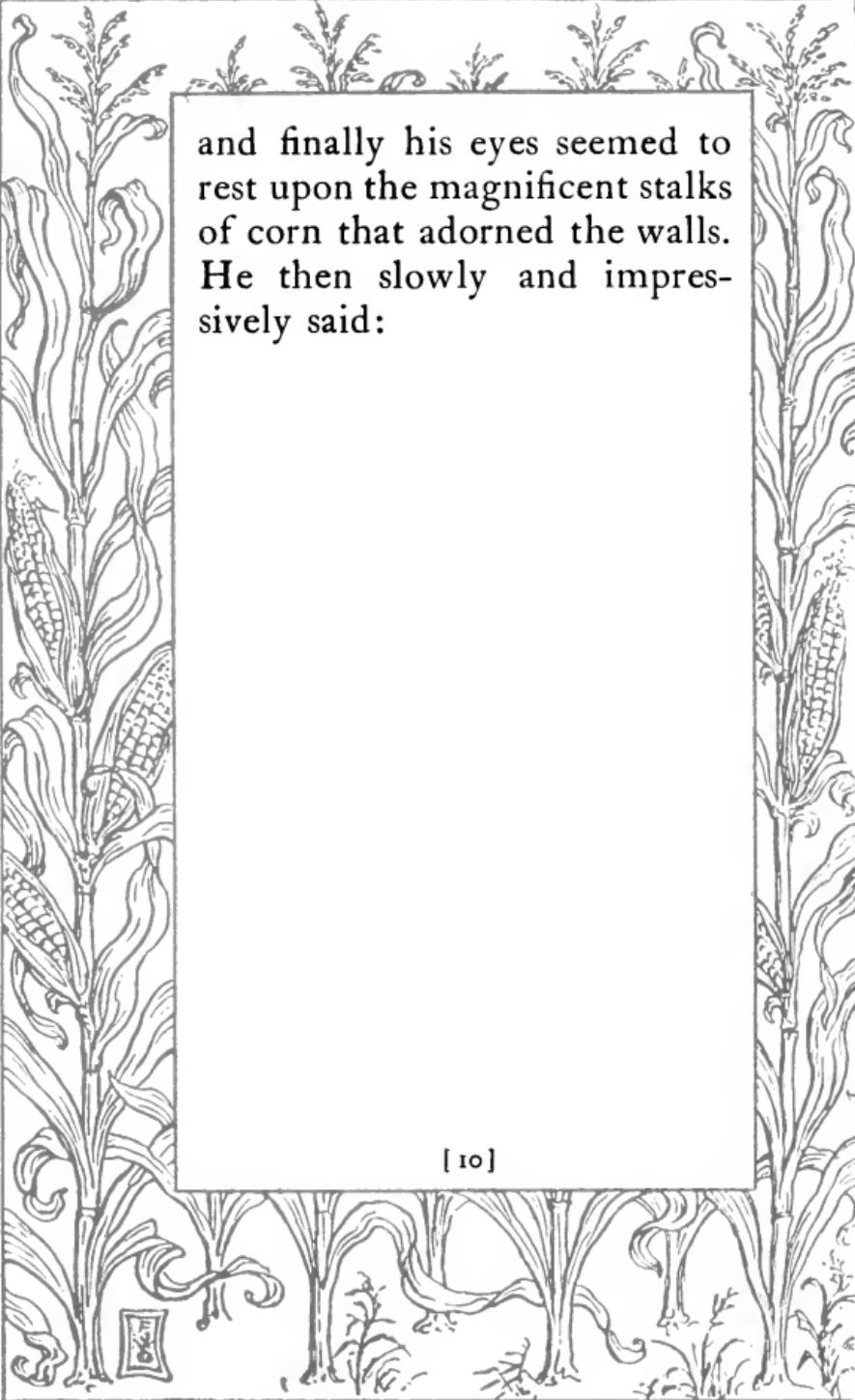
Printed for
Private Distribution
Chicago, 1912



PS662
• Z954

FOREWORD

AT a meeting of the Fellowship Club of Chicago, September 9th, 1894, the late Richard J. Oglesby, former Governor of Illinois, was a guest. He was called upon by the Toastmaster, Franklin H. Head, to respond to the toast, "What I know about Farming." Governor Oglesby sat at the speakers' table between the famous actor, Joseph Jefferson, and the well-known author, A. Conan Doyle, with whom he was in earnest conversation. The Governor arose slowly and was seemingly waiting for an inspiration. He looked deliberately upon the harvest decorations of the room

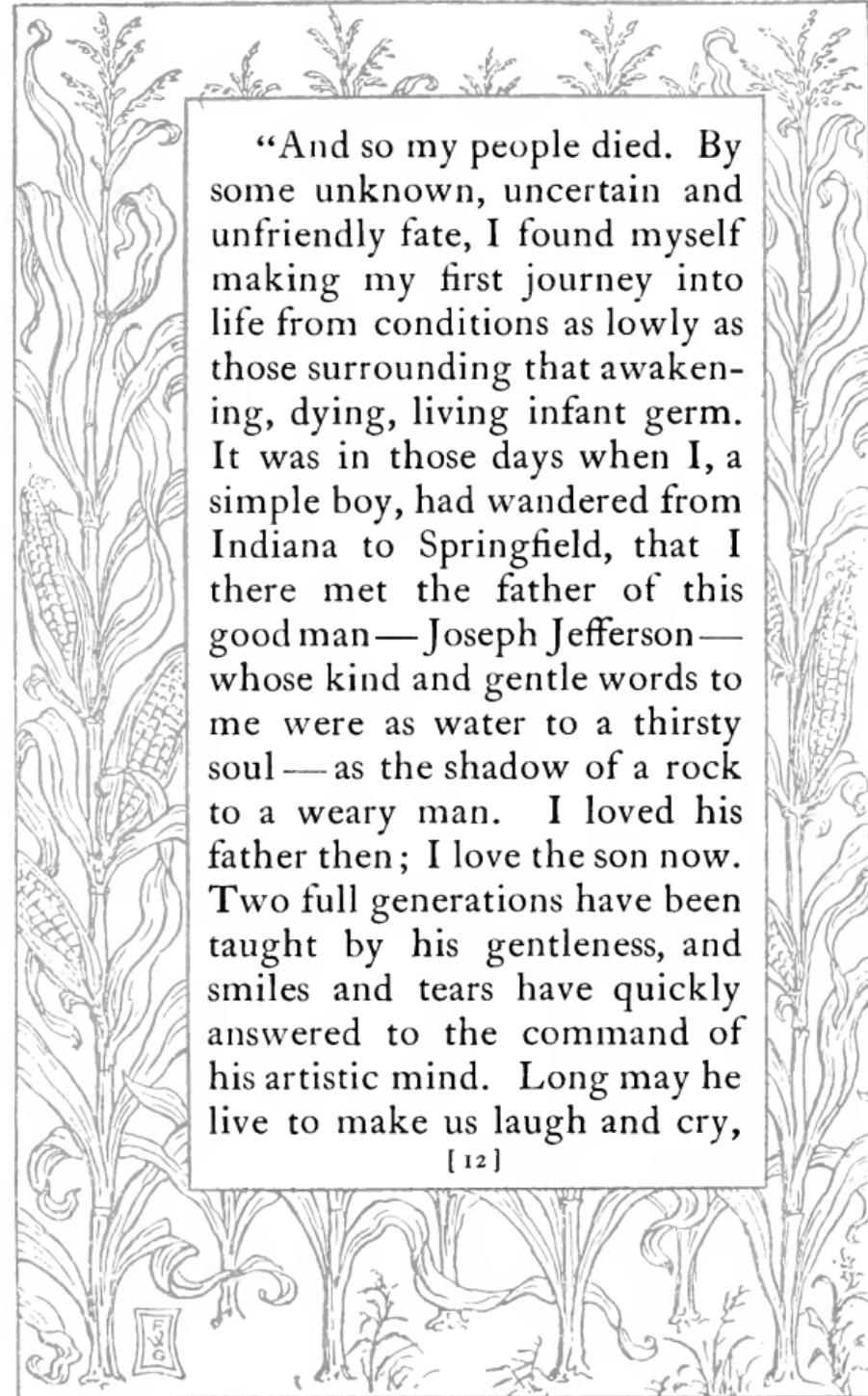


and finally his eyes seemed to rest upon the magnificent stalks of corn that adorned the walls. He then slowly and impressively said:

THE corn! the corn! the corn! that in its first beginning and in its growth has furnished aptest illustration of the tragic announcement of the chiefest hope of man. If he die he shall surely live again. Planted in the friendly but sombre bosom of mother earth, it dies. Yea, it dies the second death, surrendering up each trace of form and earthly shape until the outward tide is stopped by the reacting vital germ which, breaking all the bonds and cerements of its sad decline, comes bounding, laughing into life and light, the fittest of all the symbols that make certain promise of the fate of man. And so it died, and then it lived again.

[11]

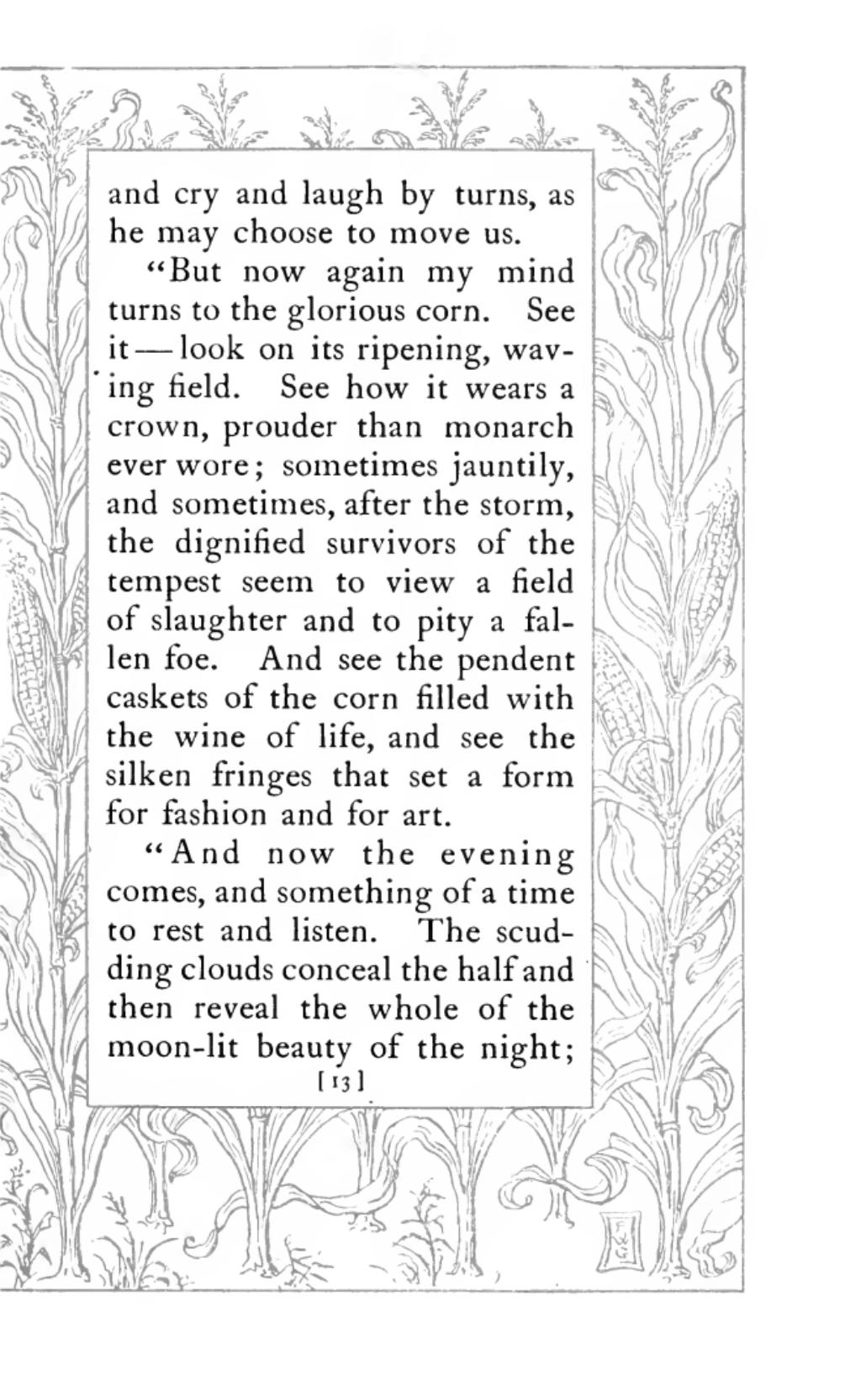




"And so my people died. By some unknown, uncertain and unfriendly fate, I found myself making my first journey into life from conditions as lowly as those surrounding that awakening, dying, living infant germ. It was in those days when I, a simple boy, had wandered from Indiana to Springfield, that I there met the father of this good man—Joseph Jefferson—whose kind and gentle words to me were as water to a thirsty soul—as the shadow of a rock to a weary man. I loved his father then; I love the son now. Two full generations have been taught by his gentleness, and smiles and tears have quickly answered to the command of his artistic mind. Long may he live to make us laugh and cry,

[12]

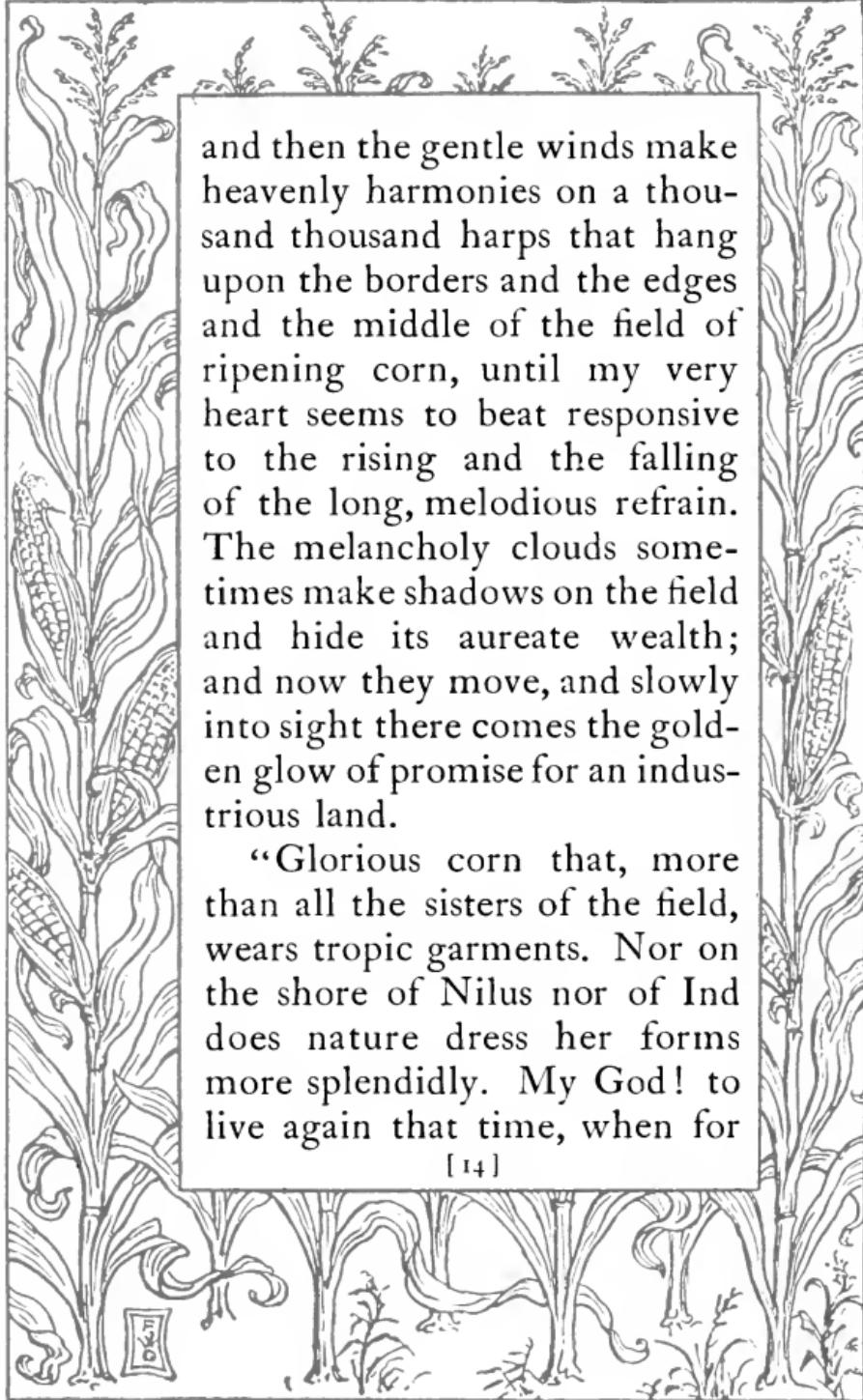




and cry and laugh by turns, as he may choose to move us.

“But now again my mind turns to the glorious corn. See it—look on its ripening, waving field. See how it wears a crown, prouder than monarch ever wore; sometimes jauntily, and sometimes, after the storm, the dignified survivors of the tempest seem to view a field of slaughter and to pity a fallen foe. And see the pendent caskets of the corn filled with the wine of life, and see the silken fringes that set a form for fashion and for art.

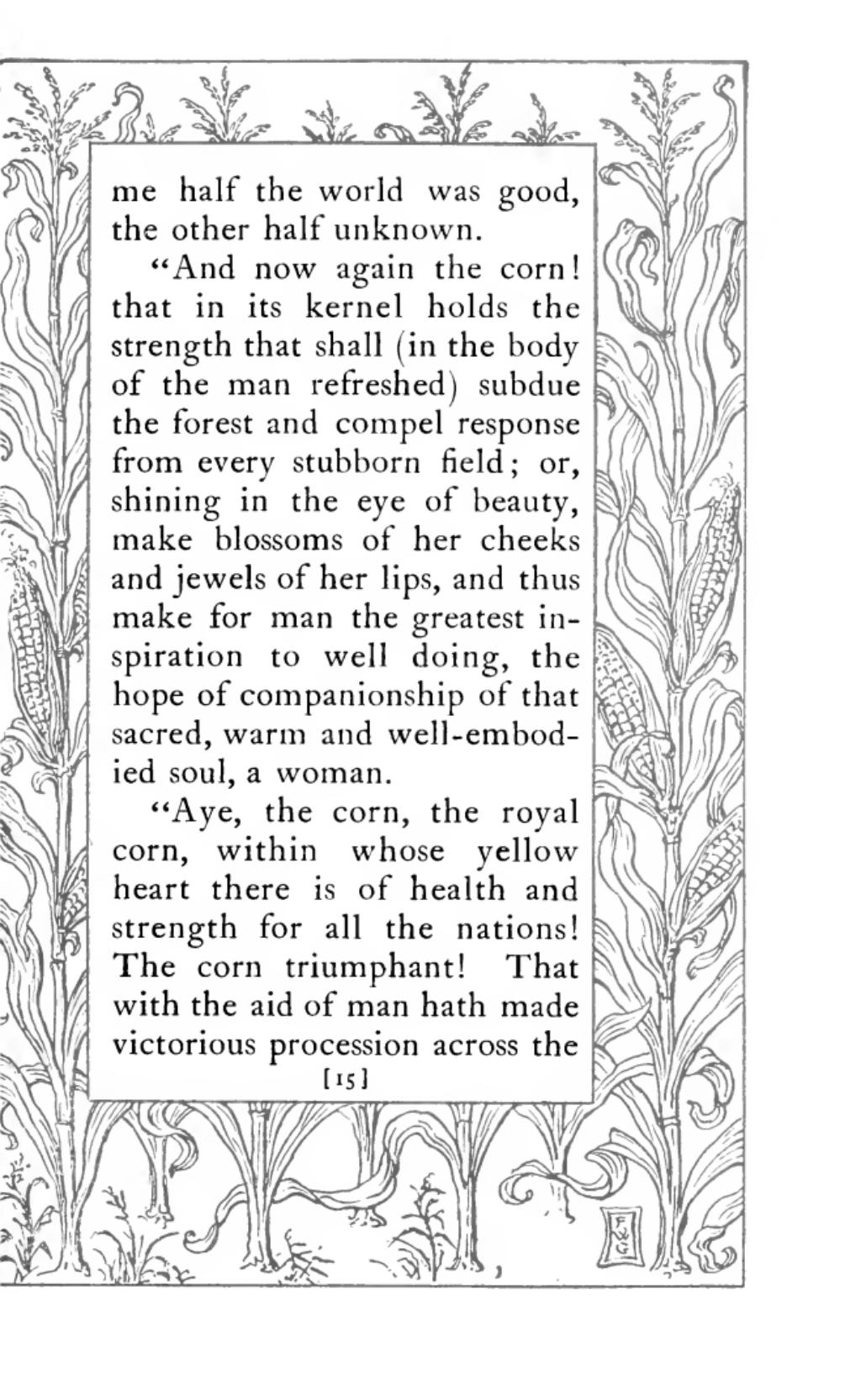
“And now the evening comes, and something of a time to rest and listen. The scudding clouds conceal the half and then reveal the whole of the moon-lit beauty of the night;



and then the gentle winds make heavenly harmonies on a thousand thousand harps that hang upon the borders and the edges and the middle of the field of ripening corn, until my very heart seems to beat responsive to the rising and the falling of the long, melodious refrain. The melancholy clouds sometimes make shadows on the field and hide its aureate wealth; and now they move, and slowly into sight there comes the golden glow of promise for an industrious land.

“Glorious corn that, more than all the sisters of the field, wears tropic garments. Nor on the shore of Nilus nor of Ind does nature dress her forms more splendidly. My God! to live again that time, when for



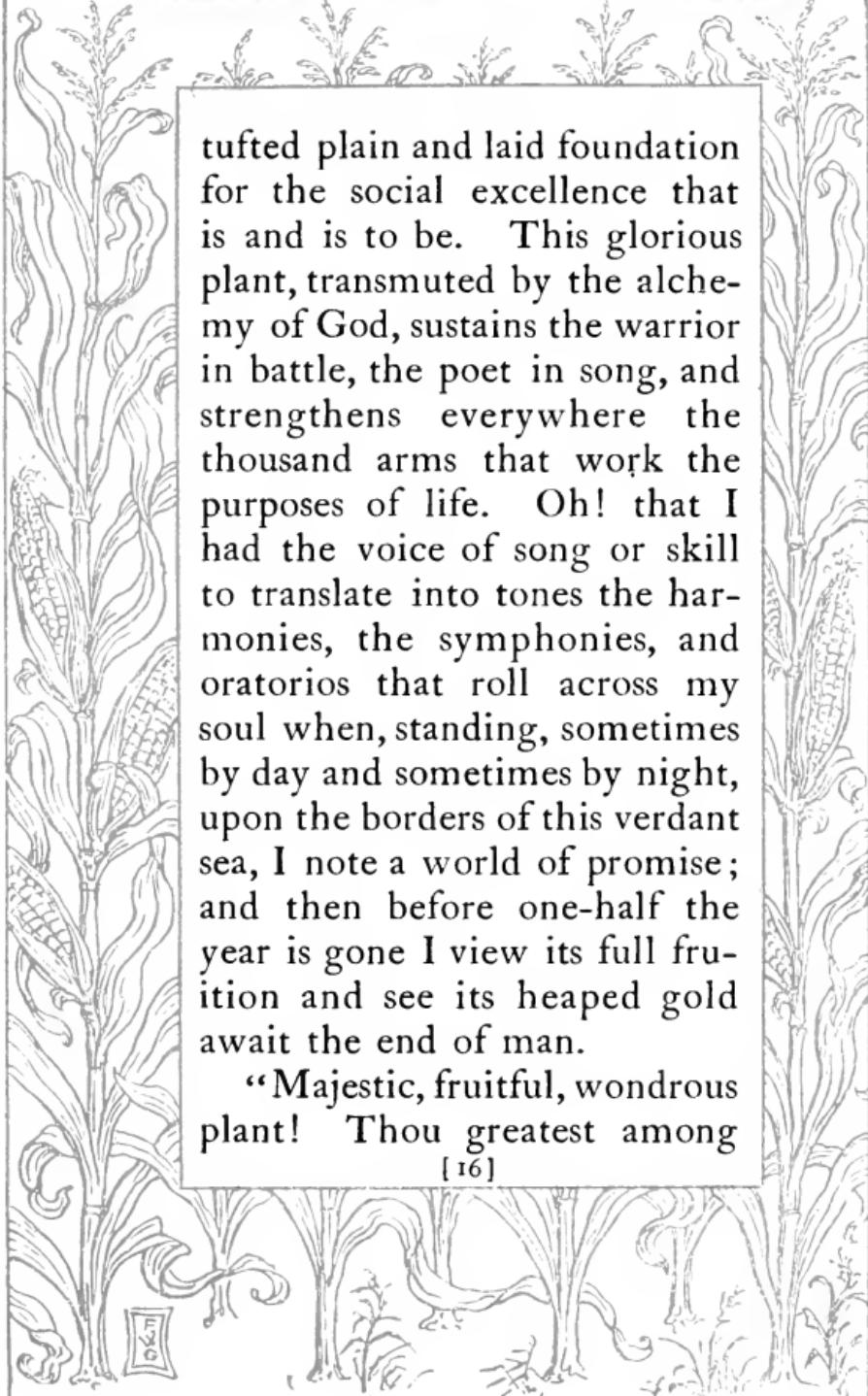


me half the world was good,
the other half unknown.

“And now again the corn!
that in its kernel holds the
strength that shall (in the body
of the man refreshed) subdue
the forest and compel response
from every stubborn field; or,
shining in the eye of beauty,
make blossoms of her cheeks
and jewels of her lips, and thus
make for man the greatest in-
spiration to well doing, the
hope of companionship of that
sacred, warm and well-embod-
ied soul, a woman.

“Aye, the corn, the royal
corn, within whose yellow
heart there is of health and
strength for all the nations!
The corn triumphant! That
with the aid of man hath made
victorious procession across the





tufted plain and laid foundation for the social excellence that is and is to be. This glorious plant, transmuted by the alchemy of God, sustains the warrior in battle, the poet in song, and strengthens everywhere the thousand arms that work the purposes of life. Oh! that I had the voice of song or skill to translate into tones the harmonies, the symphonies, and oratorios that roll across my soul when, standing, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, upon the borders of this verdant sea, I note a world of promise; and then before one-half the year is gone I view its full fruition and see its heaped gold await the end of man.

“Majestic, fruitful, wondrous plant! Thou greatest among

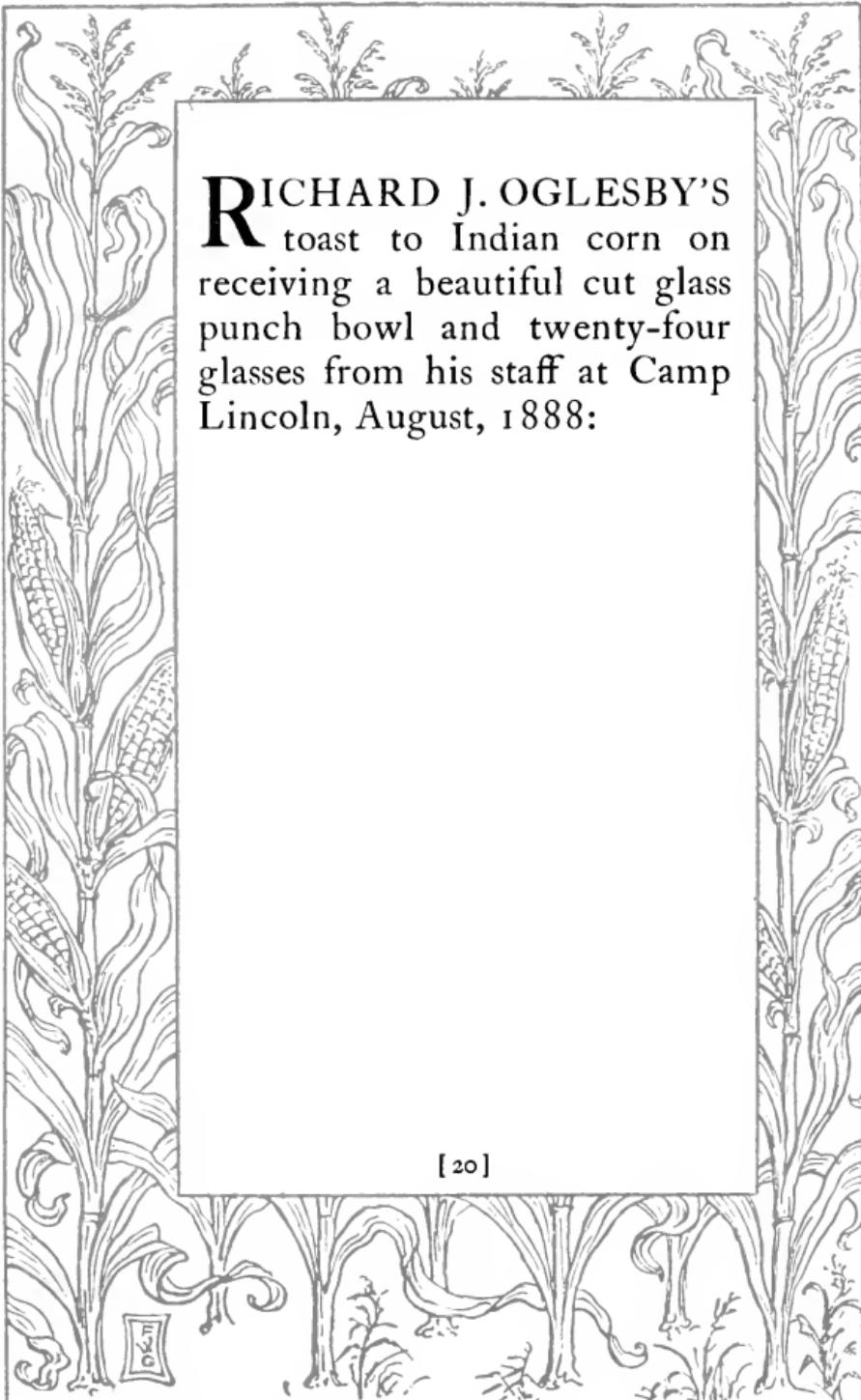
the manifestations of the wisdom and the love of God that may be seen in all the fields, or upon the hillsides, or in the valleys."



IN the beauty of his diction and the power of his eloquence, Governor Oglesby, when fully aroused, had few equals. It is said that at the time the speech was made, so great was the impression produced that many of the audience rose to their feet and remained standing until it was finished.

CHARLES G. DAWES.

Chicago, Illinois,
November 1, 1905.



RICHARD J. OGLESBY'S toast to Indian corn on receiving a beautiful cut glass punch bowl and twenty-four glasses from his staff at Camp Lincoln, August, 1888:

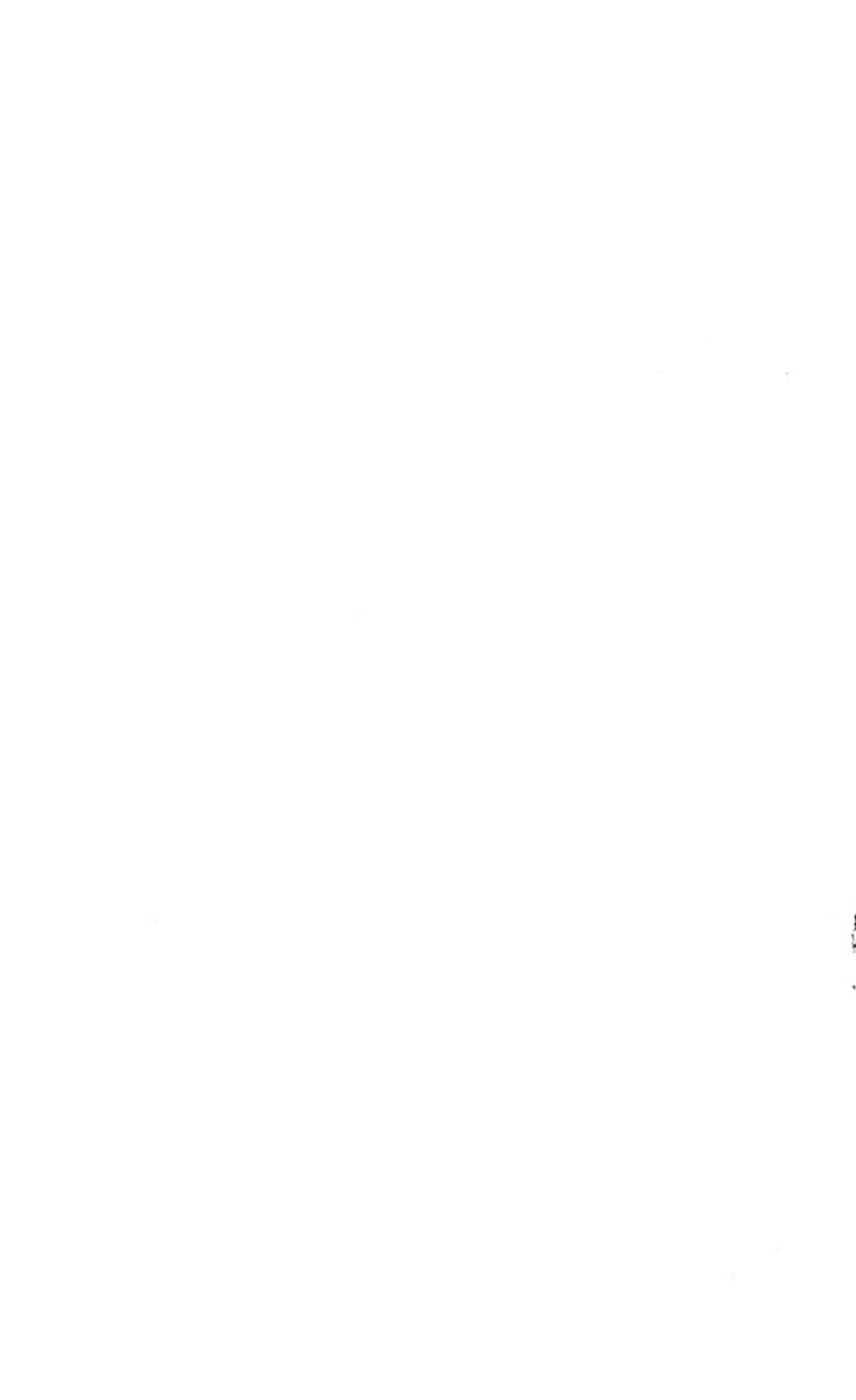


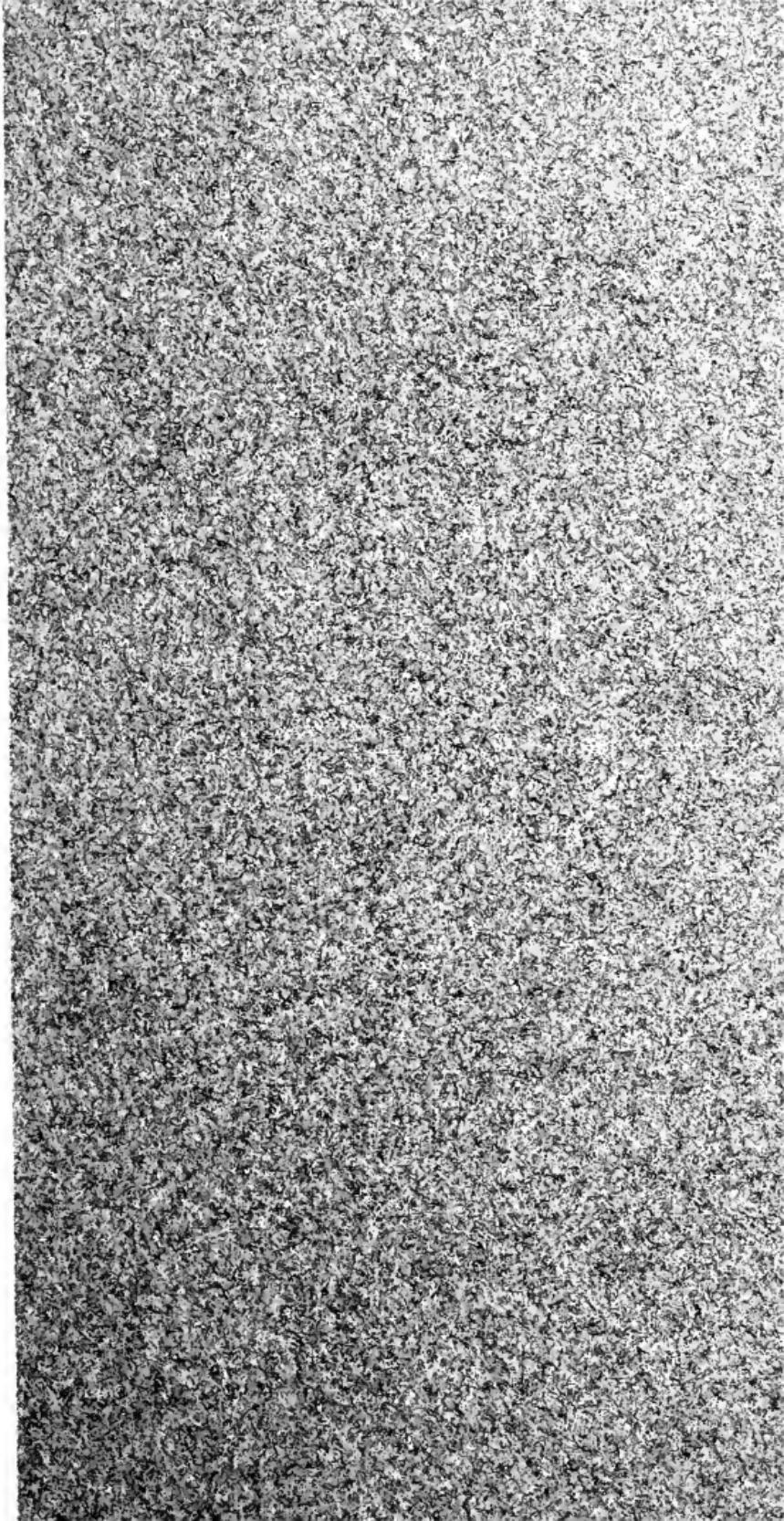
“THE corn holds inspiration from the first sunborn blade to its fluid quintessence in that exquisite bowl. How I wish my dear wife might be here to share the delight that your beautiful present gives me. I wooed my wife amidst the glories of the ripening cornfields. Bachelors,” (turning to two unmarried members of his staff) “get married. Matrimony is a blessed institution. Wife and children are ties to futurity, and they tangle you all up so with God’s arrangements that you cannot get rid of Him, even if you would.”



PRINTED BY R. R. DONNELLEY
AND SONS COMPANY AT THE
LAKESIDE PRESS, CHICAGO, ILL.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 785 171 8